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ABSTRACT

The paper discusses the results of a survey of 17 Handicapped Children's Early Education (HCEEP) demonstration programs in Illinois, Mississippi, Wisconsin, and all states west of the Mississippi River to discover how each program obtained funding to continue the programs after the 3 year grant period expired. Results of the survey revealed that all 17 programs were able to obtain some funding, although few programs were able to provide services identical to those offered during the grant period. Multiple sources of funding was the solution for almost two thirds of the programs. Over half the programs formed alliances with a local education agency, or other local agencies, and in most cases this meant changing the program significantly. Adaptation included changes in types of handicapping conditions served, ages of the children served, types of services, staff, and number of children served. As a result of the survey, six recommendations were made, such as the use of multiple sources of funding and flexibility. (PHR)

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TIMING + FLEXIBILITY + HARD WORK = SUCCESS!

A report on the continuation of
HCEEP demonstration projects

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A great concern of all HCEEP demonstration projects is whether monies will be obtained after three years of BEH funding to continue the model they have worked so hard to develop. BEH encourages programs to begin their search for continuation funds in the early years of the grant period. Initially, this may appear premature; how can a project convince an agency to support them after three years of federal funding if the model is not yet developed? However, we all realize that the inevitable will occur all too quickly, and services to children and their families will, by necessity, have to be supported by sources other than the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped.

During the December 1979 HCEEP Directors' Conference, representatives from BEH reported that 86 percent of the demonstration programs funded ten years ago are continuing to provide services to young handicapped children. To determine the success rate in obtaining continuation funding by a sample of projects recently completing the model demonstration period, and to respond to numerous requests for information on strategies to secure funds, WESTAR conducted its own survey. This study was designed to (1) determine which projects were successful in continuing their program and where they obtained their funding, (2) ascertain the changes made in the model as a prerequisite to receiving funds, (3) obtain information concerning the strategies employed and (4) compile suggestions for approaches to local, state or federal agencies which might prove strategically advantageous.

This paper reports the responses obtained from programs who have recently searched for financial support. Their efforts varied in terms of sources of funding sought and subsequently obtained and the strategies employed. This diversity of approach reflects, in large part, the practical response of projects to the particular cultural, demographic, and political variables that structured their social context. It is hoped that this report will alert ongoing programs to some of the important variables in building a structure of alliance that can be drawn upon before the end of BEH funding.

SURVEY PROCEDURES

WESTAR surveyed the 17 HCEEP demonstration programs which ended their third year of funding in June 1979 and which were located within the WESTAR catchment area. This region includes the states of Illinois, Mississippi, Wisconsin, and all states west of the Mississippi River. The project individuals who had organized and conducted the search for continuation monies were eager to share their experiences and suggestions with the HCEEP network. They had just completed the sometimes arduous process of convincing organizations of their program's value and could quickly recall the triumphs and pitfalls they had encountered.

A telephone survey was conducted in November 1979 with all 17 demonstration projects. Contact was made with the former demonstration director or coordinator or with staff that had been employed during BEH funding and continued to work in the program. One WESTAR staff member conducted all of the structured interviews. Respondents were asked a series of questions designed to elicit information concerning the current funding agency, the population served, the number of staff currently employed and

changes in service delivery. In addition, the interviewer attempted to ascertain the specific strategies employed by project staff to obtain funds and encouraged respondents to offer suggestions to other programs involved in the search process.

CONTINUATION SUCCESS

It is a pleasure to report that all 17 projects (100%) continued, in some form, the model developed during the 3-year HCEEP grant period. However, few programs are providing services identical to those offered in the previous three years. Changes in target population, number and age of children, personnel, and delivery modes were reported by virtually all programs. Nevertheless, all programs reported they were able to obtain financial support for significant parts of their model and were continuing to provide services to young handicapped children. It appears, therefore, that the "seed money" approach--used by the federal government to initiate innovative programs, support them for a limited period of time, and then help them become self-sustaining--was successful for the projects surveyed.

SOURCES OF FUNDING

MULTIPLE SOURCES

While it may be ideal for a project to obtain funding through a single source, the majority of projects had to turn to multiple sources for funding. Only 35 percent obtained complete funding through one source. Forty-seven percent received funding from two different sources, 12 percent through three sources and 6 percent through four separate sources.

For example, one project which received funds from four sources approached both the local school district and a state agency for money for its classroom program, engaged in local fund raising to finance its parent training program and charged some children fees for services. In contrast, another project obtained complete funding by submitting a grant proposal for a federal Title IV grant. Even those programs that approached only one organization for monies had to be sensitive to the multiple funding resources available to that organization. One project was able to obtain full funding only by tapping two sources of funds available within the local school system, i.e., federal Title I monies and state special education funds.

Although the complexity of the task of searching for funds varied, in all cases skill was required in presenting the model in a way that would be appropriate for the types of funds available to a particular organization. For example, in states which prohibit the use of state or local monies for preschool programs, an appeal to a school district for federal funds was more appropriate.

In short, it was important for projects to think in terms of multiple rather than single source funding, since the latter was not always possible. In addition, it was strategically useful for projects to be aware of the multiple funding resources of the organizations to which they applied in order to tailor their approach to fit the allocation guidelines and constraints of these organizations.

KINDS OF FUNDING SOURCES

Table 1 lists the agencies approached and the types of funds within these agencies which projects were able to identify as the source of their financial support. The specificity of knowledge concerning the types of funds tapped within an agency varied among respondents. This is a reflection in part of the complex interrelationship of the federal, state and local funds available to an agency such as a public school district. It is also an indication of the specificity of knowledge that respondents found necessary in order to obtain funding. In some cases, project personnel needed only a very general knowledge of the funding requirements for different types of monies. In other cases, however, the very success of the funding search depended on the project director/coordinator presenting to a decision-making board not only a viable program but also a concrete suggestion for potential monies that could be tapped.

TABLE 1
Sources of Funding

Agency Approached	Funding Received	No. of Projects[a]
Office of Indian Education, HEW	Title IV	1
State Dept. of Education	94-142	1
	State (unspecified)	1
State Health and Social Service Agency	State (unspecified)	1
State Mental Health Agency	State (unspecified)	1
Public School District	Title I	4
	Title I Migrant	1
	94-142	1
	State Division of Mental Health	1
	State (unspecified)	3
	Local funds	2
	Unspecified	3
Local Retardation Centers	Local funds	1
	State funds	1
	Unspecified	1
Local Government	Local funds	1
Local Service Agency	State (through ARC)	1
	United Way	1
	Local funds	1
Other	Fees to children	2
	Fees to Service Agency	1
	Medical insurance	1
	Fund raising	1

[a] n=17. Number of projects is greater than 17 due to multiple source factor.

Table 1 clearly illustrates that most projects (65%) relied on more than one source for their funding. The combination of funding sources was extremely varied among programs and covered federal, state, and local monies.

LINKAGE TO LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

Although funds for the continuation of direct services came from many different sources, projects had to establish an important alliance with a local organization for support. In some cases, this organization had served as the project's fiscal agency during the BEH-funded demonstration period but the terms of a new relationship had to be negotiated when the project ended its BEH funding. Whether or not it previously had served as a fiscal agency, this local organization often became a source of partial funding or a provider of classroom or office space.

Of the 17 projects, 10 (59%) formed alliances with a Local Education Agency; 6 (35%) established links with local agencies such as a mental retardation center, a university medical center, or a preschool developmental center; and one was affiliated with an Indian tribe's educational division. The evidence of close relationships with the LEAs is extremely encouraging, particularly in light of an HCEEP objective to foster strong working alliances with the local school districts.

As a prerequisite to aligning itself with a local organization and meeting the requirements of diverse funding sources, a project often had to make significant changes in its model. The following section describes some of the types of changes necessary to adapt to the new requirements.

ADAPTATIONS OF THE MODEL

TYPES OF HANDICAPPING CONDITIONS

The majority of projects continued to provide services to children within the same categories of handicapping conditions (see Figure 1). Four projects reported that they have expanded their services to include children with a wider range of disabilities or, as in one case, to include nonhandicapped children. For one program, the expansion was mandated by the community which had provided support through private contributions. Two other projects enlarged their scope to meet the needs of the local agency through which they obtained funds. Expansion in the fourth project involved the inclusion of gifted and normal children in the program.

FIGURE 1

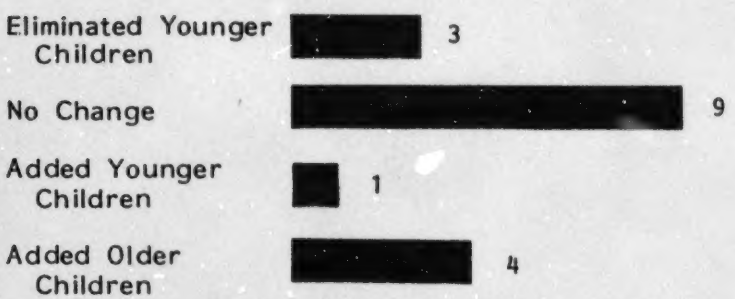
Types of Handicapping Conditions
(by Number of Projects)

AGES OF CHILDREN SERVED

The ages of children changed in almost half of the programs surveyed (see Figure 2). Many projects felt the impact of state legislation concerning the use of state and local funds for preschool children. For instance, one project which obtained Title I funding was prohibited from serving children below the age of three years. Two other programs were forced to eliminate three- and four-year-olds due to funding restrictions. On the other hand, one project in a state with permissive legislation was able to expand its program to include even younger children. The service requirements of local school districts and local agencies such as a mental retardation board made it necessary for four other projects to include older children.

FIGURE 2

Ages of Children
(by Number of Projects)



TYPES OF SERVICES

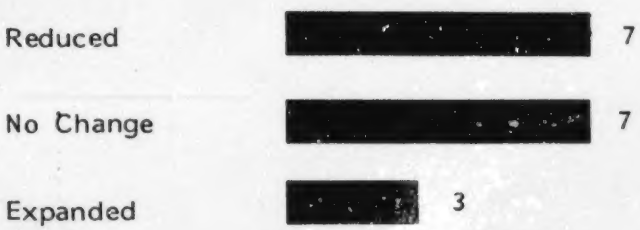
An important factor in obtaining funds was the project's willingness to make changes in its services to fit the restrictions of the organization from which it sought support. Figure 3 reveals the extent of the modifications. Changes took the form of a reduction in services for seven (41 percent) of the projects. For example, two programs eliminated their home-based component, one discontinued its center-based services, another dropped the

rural homes in its home-based component due to a cut in travel allowance, and yet another project terminated the medical care formerly offered during the model demonstration phase. One of the projects was integrated so completely into the school system that the autonomy of the program was lost, but the curriculum and the teacher training program developed by the model continued.

Of the remaining projects, 41 percent retained the essential components of their model while 18 percent expanded to include more specialists, an additional component for nonhandicapped children or a new service for the handicapped.

FIGURE 3

Types of Services
(by Number of Projects)



STAFF

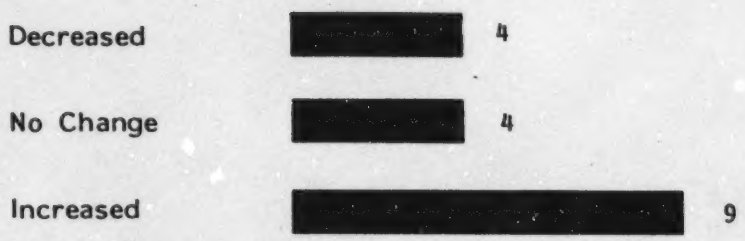
While staff positions often were eliminated, particularly when a major component of the model was dropped, the new funding parameters sometimes resulted in the hiring of more staff and the availability of a wider range of specialists. For example, it was often the case that programs that aligned themselves with a school system or a community agency found that they had access to specialists such as physical therapists, speech pathologists, and nurses.

NUMBER OF CHILDREN SERVED

The number of children served was affected by all the other changes in the model just discussed. When funds for staff positions, materials, space or a particular component of the program were reduced, the project could serve fewer children. Increases in the number of children were often the result of incorporation of the model into a local organization which had the funds to train additional staff. These agencies frequently included more children when they expanded the model to serve a wider range of handicapping conditions. Figure 4 displays the changes in number of children served.

FIGURE 4

Number of Children
(by Number of Projects)



APPROACHING THE "POWERS THAT BE": STRATEGIES FOR OBTAINING FUNDING

Once a potential funding agency was identified and the project had come to terms with the changes in its model that were likely to be required, the next step was for the project to determine how the decisions were made in the target agency and to mobilize efforts to win the support of persons who would have a bearing on the allotment of funds. These brief examples illustrate the types of tactics employed by projects as they adapted to the diverse structures of power and influence in their communities.

A PERSONAL APPROACH

For virtually all the programs, a personal approach to an influential person in the prospective funding agency was important in securing monies. For example, in one case, funding was arranged when the director of the project, who had had a previous working relationship with the State Director of Special Education, made a direct appeal to this person. In other cases, personal alliances between the project director and the head of a local agency or the superintendent of the local school district effected the same result. Often such approaches were accompanied by a written proposal or a more formal oral presentation to the decision making board. In one instance, the director of the demonstration project was the superintendent of special education in the school district and was in an excellent position to arrange funding for the project.

INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

The use of influential people from the community was of significance for most of the programs. A third of the projects specifically mentioned that they had placed influential individuals on their staffs and advisory boards. Other projects indicated that it was important that staff, parents and project advisory board members were also board members of local funding organizations. One project noted that they had sought out the prominent citizens of their community (bankers, doctors, ministers, local politicians, etc.) for their advisory board and that these people convinced local organizations and the local government that the project provided an essential service. Support from well known and respected individuals was important when one program submitted a formal proposal for a federal grant. Letters of

support from the community and from state agency personnel were thought to have helped win the grant award.

Six projects stated that community backing was an important factor in a funding decision. One of these was convinced that it would not have been funded had it not been for community support. Many more indicated that community support was a desirable strength with may eventually be an asset in other funding searches.

ROLE OF PARENTS

The role of parents in influencing the funding decisions varied from community to community but for most (71%) of the projects, parental support was considered important. It some communities, parents directly approached school superintendents and the boards of local organizations such as the Association for Retarded Citizens and argued forcefully in favor of the program. In other communities, such a direct approach was considered inappropriate and even counter-productive. Instead, parents helped by informally spreading the word that the project was a success. It some cases, parents were board members of the funding organizations and had a decisive influence over the decision to fund. In other instances, the parents as a group approached the local school board or agency and sought collectively to have the impact which they felt they would not have had individually. Even projects that made formal applications to federal or state governments found that letters from enthusiastic parents carried considerable weight.

In the projects where parents were not involved in the search for funds, financial support was usually arranged through the personal alliances of the director and parental support was not deemed necessary. In at least one project, parents had not been very actively involved in the project, and thus did not offer assistance in the funding search.

EASE IN OBTAINING FUNDS

A potential funding organization's responsiveness to a project's request for monies ranged from eagerness to persistent refusal. One project found to its relief that the state department of education was looking for worthy special education programs for its 94-142 monies. From the first year of BEH funding, the state had sent officials for frequent on-site visits. By the second year, it had guaranteed to pay the majority of the project's expenses after the 3-year grant period ended.

Other programs were not as fortunate. In one situation, a school was reluctant to maintain a classroom and staff for a small population of handicapped infants living up to 500 miles apart. In another case, community support was not persuasive enough to convince the local school board to finance a project. The program's response to this impasse was to go directly to the state department of education and ultimately to the state legislature to lobby for legislation to ensure that their particular category of handicapped children would be considered a priority group in the allocation of newly available 94-142 funds. With the help of pressure from the state government on the state department of special education, which in turn influenced the local school district, the program was funded.

TIMING

The timing of the search for contacts and alliances was critical for most projects. Almost every respondent mentioned that it was important to start early. Ten projects had formed close alliances with their eventual funding agency from the beginning of their original 3-year demonstration grants. Such ties were particularly useful if they involved some financial link, for example, if a school district funded part of the cost of the BEH model or provided classroom space and supplies. Simple proximity also helped. When services were provided in a local school building, school officials had an opportunity to make frequent on-site visits, observe the children, and talk informally with the staff.

Of the seven projects that began their search late in their BEH funding cycle, most commented that they wished they had started earlier. Many had trouble funding their entire program and one even had to discontinue services for a few months while waiting for the release of funds from a local source.

SUMMARY OF STRATEGIES

The strategies for obtaining continuation funding varied from project to project depending on state laws, availability of funds, and the structure of influence and alliance that affected the decision making process. Given the variety in social contexts, there was not one "successful" strategy. Many approaches need to be combined. In one case, a project staff member was a board member of the local Association for Retarded Citizens which determined funding for the preschool to which the project applied for aid. The director of this same preschool was on the advisory board of the demonstration project. With the help of these influential people, as well as an extensive public relations campaign which included radio and television talk shows, presentations to local organizations, dissemination of printed materials, and an active parent contingent, a decision was made in favor of funding the project. Some projects found it was not always important to generate community support since the influence of one influential person was in some cases sufficient to obtain funding. Similarly, there was no simple formula for winning community backing. In some locales, a media approach was useful whereas in other small communities, word of mouth and an individual approach to the local banker or doctor was far more effective. Projects were forced to maintain an approach that best suited their program and their community.

SUGGESTIONS

Comments from the projects surveyed, coupled with observations and analysis of their experiences, can be summarized as follows:

1 SEEK MULTIPLE FUNDING

The willingness to seek multiple sources of funding and to deal with the complexities that this involves seems to have been essential to the survival of the projects. Skill in tapping the diverse types of monies available and the ability to know how to approach a number of different organizations was important. The suggestion that naturally arises from these observations is that projects should begin to prepare themselves for this reality instead of expecting to apply to a single source and

obtain one comprehensive grant. While such funding is a possibility, it is unwise for a project to count on an easy solution to the funding dilemma.

2

BE FLEXIBLE

Flexibility and long range planning for the manner in which the model can be integrated into existing programs is important to a project. Many programs integrated their services so completely into a local organization that aspects of the model had to be eliminated or adapted. Again, the willingness and ability to envision and plan for such adaptability was critical to the continuation of essential services for young handicapped children.

3

DEFINE PROJECT STRATEGICALLY

It is crucial for the project staff to be perceptive in assessing the social situation and defining the project in a way that is strategically advantageous. For example, in one community, it was important for a project to define itself from the very beginning as a "local agency" integrally linked to the local school system, in order to avoid the suspicion that would have been directed at a "foreign" agency. Another project had to resort to the opposite strategy and define itself as a "regional" facility in order to distinguish itself from other special education programs in the community. The advice of one project director was to be sure not to appear to be in competition with local agencies by providing overlapping services. He also noted that state and federal agencies are often interested in knowing just how the project proposes to work effectively with local organizations. In brief then, sensitivity to these factors is a necessary skill.

4

START EARLY

All projects emphasized that an early start in cultivating important alliances was absolutely essential. Most directors suggested that projects begin forming these alliances when they are first establishing their model. It may be advisable to rent classroom space in a local school or agency which might eventually be willing to fund the program. Financial ties, such as agreements to help fund part of the model program, resulted in particularly strong alliances. Care should be taken when selecting the members of the advisory board, keeping in mind that the influence of these people was often of great value in securing continuation funding. It was also suggested that projects keep local and state organizations informed of the development of the model and that data on the progress of children be kept up to date and available for review by interested persons. Invitations for on-site visits were also helpful in keeping state and local officials informed and in building their interest and commitment to the project.

5 GENERATE PUBLICITY

Many suggestions focused on the skills necessary to present the project in a favorable light. It was suggested that both oral and written presentations emphasize the progress of children, speak to the needs of the funding agency, present a good rationale for the service, and emphasize cost effectiveness. The use of slide-tape shows and other visual aides were deemed valuable when used in conjunction with oral presentations. Project directors indicated a media campaign (TV, radio, brochures) was very time consuming and required much advance planning. Professional assistance might be an asset to ensure that the impression on the public is favorable.

Techniques for generating word of mouth publicity included strengthening ties with parents and influential community individuals. Specifically, it was suggested that projects involve parents through parent training, parent meetings, the institution of a Parents Advisory Board and in the funding campaign. It was helpful to place influential members of the community on the Advisory Board or staff. Involving both parents and influential people was a tried and proven method for ensuring good word of mouth publicity.

6 INFLUENCE POLICY MAKERS

The use of lobbying to present the needs of the project to the state legislature has proved to be a complex task. While three projects were involved in lobbying, only one project's efforts resulted in the passing of legislation. A project director who had worked with the local representative to the state legislature indicated that such a representative could be useful not only in lobbying efforts but as a source of information concerning available funding. The most effective approach to such a person, it was suggested, was through their administrative assistant. This person usually collects data and information concerning projects and funding sources and makes recommendations which carry a great deal of weight with the representative. It was noted that it may be easier to establish a dialogue with the administrative assistant and that such a long-term relationship may be of far greater value than a quick on-site visit to the project by the representative himself.

In conclusion, the essence of these suggestions is that projects be sensitive to factors that are important in their unique social contexts and that they seek to be timely, resourceful and flexible in their search for continuation funding.